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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to look at various types of classroom interventions used by teachers and school psychologists in elementary schools. Variables were studied that could influence their choice in intervention selection. Differences in teacher and school psychologist training and geographic location were compared. Survey data were collected from Des Moines, Iowa; Hartford, Connecticut; Atlanta, Georgia; and Salt Lake City, Utah. In Salt Lake City, in addition to the surveys, investigators went to the survey sites to observe permanent products in the classroom and to interview the teachers. Most respondents held the belief that the least intrusive, more positive interventions were preferable to more intrusive, aversive interventions. Some regional differences were noted. Differences were also seen in the type of training teachers and school psychologists received. A higher endorsement for intervention usage was obtained from interviews than from survey data. (JDM)

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Saying and Doing the Right Things: A Comparison of Teacher and School Psychologist Intervention Knowledge and Competencies

By: Peter M. Nicholas, Daniel Olympia, and William Jenson

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of School Psychologists (Washington, DC, April 17-21, 2001).

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Abstract

This presentation is based on various types of classroom interventions used in regular education elementary schools reported by teachers and school psychologists. Variables were studied that could influence a teachers' or school psychologist's choice in intervention selection. Differences in school teacher's and school psychologists training, geographic location, and support were studied for differences.

Survey information was gathered from four, geographic regions: Des Moines, Iowa; Hartford, Connecticut; Atlanta, Georgia, and Salt Lake City, Utah. These sites were selected because they were metropolitan in nature, and they represented four different regions. In Salt Lake City, in addition to the surveys, investigators went to the same sites the surveys were sent to observe permanent products in the classroom, and to interview the teachers. The survey data was compared to data from the permanent product/interviews.

Most respondents held beliefs that the least intrusive, more positive interventions were preferable to more intrusive, aversive interventions. Some differences were seen by region response. Differences were also seen in the type of training both professional groups have received and continue to receive. There was a much higher endorsement received for intervention usage obtained from interviews than was seen from data received from the survey.

N.A.S.P. Wednesday, April 18, 2001 Presentation

Saying and Doing the Right Things: A Comparison of Teacher and School Psychologist Intervention Knowledge and Competencies.

Presenters: Dr. Peter M. Nicholas, Dr. Daniel Olympia, and Dr. William Jenson

The research project became the doctoral dissertation for Dr. Nicholas, and Dr. Jenson served as the chair of the committee. It was completed in 1998. It is titled Teachers' And School Psychologists' Selection And Use Of Classroom Interventions For Reducing Behavioral Excesses, Nicholas, P.M., 1998.

Description of Research Project

Four cities with a population of 1 million people or more were selected to participate in the study. Urban centers in different locations of the country were desired to represent different geographic areas. The cities selected were Des Moines, Iowa; Atlanta, Georgia; Hartford Connecticut; and Salt Lake City, Utah.

A questionnaire was developed in three parts to address demographic information, response to a behavior vignette (Walker & Walker, 1991) and an inquiry whether the respondent had posted rules and consequences in their classroom, and the final section was to establish interventions used and the frequency of their usage. Also asked in the last section of the questionnaire was what would prevent different intervention usage by the respondent? A final question was asked to determine how satisfied the respondent was with their career.

This study investigated various types of classroom interventions used in regular education elementary schools reported by teachers and school psychologists. Studies have attempted to determine the interventions used, but they have been analog. Analog studies rely on survey responses. There have been questions raised about survey responses and how valid they are. (Babbie, 1990).The present study asked teachers and school psychologists about the interventions used by survey and then examined permanent products in teachers' classrooms to document procedures implemented. Interviews of teachers in Salt Lake City were also used to compare to survey data.

The present study investigated the preferences of regular education elementary school teachers and school psychologists about the interventions they would or would not select in modifying a student's behavior in the classroom. Variables were also studied that could influence a teacher's or school psychologist's choice in intervention selection.

A questionnaire was sent to regular education elementary school teachers and school psychologists. Questionnaires were sent to (a) gather information on reported beliefs on effective intervention use, (b) assess teachers' and school psychologists' intervention knowledge, and (c) determine training needs of teachers and school psychologists. The subject pool receiving questionnaires consisted of 272 regular education elementary school teachers and 263

school psychologists. One hundred ninety-four school teachers and 97 school psychologists returned completed questionnaires. This information was compiled and compared to information gathered by interview/permanent product review. Assessment between what can be documented in intervention selection was compared to what teachers say they use.

Most respondents held beliefs that the least intrusive, most positive interventions were preferable to more intrusive, aversive interventions. Some school psychologists commented that they do not believe interventions are part of their role or that their employer requires a more testing and assessment job description, which may indicate confusion or role identity and function. Teachers stated that behavioral training has not always been readily available but are willing to implement procedures as they are trained.

ERIC and PSYC LIT were used to determine the types of interventions commonly used in school classrooms as reported in the literature. Respondents were asked to review the interventions (a glossary of terms was included) and to select the ones used and not used. The purpose of this research was:

1. To see what regular education elementary school teachers and school psychologists use for behavioral interventions.

2. What makes interventions acceptable or not. (Witt & Elliot, 1985).

3. Compare analog data to direct observation permanent product/interview data. Is what is being reported by teachers as interventions used and preferences actually being used? (Elliot, 1987).

Results

The results were as follows:

1. For teachers, talking out (55%), disruptive/acting out (29%), not respecting others (29%), not following directions (27%), and fighting (21%) were the behaviors that respondents had the most difficulty in managing. The behaviors teachers listed as most problematic for them to manage are externalizing, disruptive behaviors. These are the very behaviors that many special education students exhibit.

2. For teachers, the least problematic behaviors to manage were interrupting (3%), not listening/paying attention (9%), arguing (9%), and aggression (9%).

3. Variables that teachers find least to most problematic in accepting interventions were other staff finds unacceptable (51%), expense or cost (30%), risky to use (25%), lack the skill to use the intervention (24%), Parents find intervention unacceptable (23%), Takes too much effort to make material or physically alters class setting (23%), district or school policy prohibit (23%), takes too much time

to do (18%), does not fit classroom values or philosophy (16%), and affects other students adversely (14%).

4. Variables that school psychologists find least to most problematic in accepting interventions were lacks the skill to use the intervention (30%), district or school policy prohibits (26%), other staff finds unacceptable (23%), does not fit classroom values or philosophy (22%), expense or cost (21%), affects other students adversely (20%), parents find intervention unacceptable (15%), risky to use (14%), takes too much time to make material or physically alters class setting (11%), and takes too much time to do (7%).

5. The ten most selected interventions that teachers use were verbal praise (81%), model appropriate behavior (53%), counsel student (46%), proximity praise (42%), tokens or points (29%), homenote to parents (27%), reward replacement behavior (25%), verbal reprimand (25%), redirection (24%), and call parent (21%). Interventions selected were for the most part non-intrusive.

6. Interventions used least by teachers were corporal punishment (73%), physical guidance/restraint (35%), out-of-school suspension (35%), send to principal (26%), detention (18%), in-school suspension (14%), name on the board (14%), public posting (13%), ignore (9%), contract (8%), and overcorrection (7%). More intrusive interventions were more represented in this category. One possible explanation could be that regular education teachers do not receive introduction and training to research compiled on these interventions.

7. The most selected interventions used by school psychologists were verbal praise (61%), call parent (41%), model appropriate behavior (39%), parent conference (36%), proximity praise (36%), privileges (35%), homenote (35%), counsel student (31%), redirection (31%), reward replacement behavior (29%), contract (26%), tokens or points (24%), cognitive problem solving (22%), privilege withdrawal (22%).

8. Interventions used the least by school psychologists to modify behavior were corporal punishment (82%), physical guidance/restraint (43%), out-of-school suspension (25%), commercial discipline program (21%), overcorrection (18%), send to the principal (15%), name on the board (14%), verbal reprimand (10%), timeout (9%), detention (8%).

9. In comparing interview data from teachers in Salt Lake City to their own survey information, large differences were seen. In interviews, teachers basically responded that they have used their 10 most reported interventions at extremely high rates (68% to 100%) as compared to what they said they used in their survey (1% to 81%). This may have been due to wanting to look good in front of the interviewer.

10. In asking teachers what were their posted rules, they responded with respect others (62%), talk only with permission (42%), follow directions (42%), hands and feet to self (32%), complete work (28%), stay quiet (24%), be prepared (24%), listen (17%), respect yourself (16%), be on time (15%), be kind/courteous (15%), respect the school (12%). A problem seen by these posted rules is that for many, they are vague, poorly defined, and hard to track. A problem with a rule like respecting others is the considerable range of just what respect is? This rule opens the door for much arguing.

In general, this research demonstrated that regular education elementary school teachers are willing to have students with special needs in their classrooms. It also shows that these teachers have a limited scope of the types of management problems these students may have. Interventions that are reported in the literature as being effective to use are largely unknown or untried by regular education teachers. Training of validated interventions for behavioral management for regular education teachers would be important before numbers of students with severe behavioral problems are placed in their classrooms.

School psychologists could be the ones to help regular education teachers achieve the knowledge about validated interventions and the training of teachers in intervention usage. Furthermore, school psychologists could remain as a consultant, support, and mentor for teachers in the continuing use of interventions. One disturbing result of this research was that some school psychologists do not see this as their current role and function. Many still see themselves as a tester, doing assessments to qualify students for services. Some shared comments that they were not seen by the districts they worked for as interventionists. Others indicated a lack of time to be effective as ongoing consultants.

For regular education elementary teachers to succeed with behavior management problem students, and to lessen the numbers of students referred it will take more than their willingness to have these students enter their classrooms. They need training in behavioral management intervention skills. School psychologists could serve as both trainers and ongoing consultants if school districts would dedicate a portion of their time to this endeavor.

NASP 2001 Annual Convention, April 17-22, 2001. "Saying and doing the right things: a comparison of teacher and school psychologist intervention knowledge and competencies.

Three Most Problematic Behaviors to Manage From All Teachers

1	Talking out	108 (55%)
2	Disruptive/acting out	56 (29%)
	Not respecting others	56 (29%)
3	Not following directions	53 (27%)
4	Fighting	40 (21%)
5	Not finishing work	34 (17%)
6	Not respecting authority	25 (13%)
7	Out of seat	21 (11%)
8	Aggression	18 (9%)
	Arguing	18 (9%)
9	Not listening/paying attention	17 (9%)
10	Interrupting	5 (3%)

Ten Most Selected Interventions by All Teachers

1.	Verbal praise	157 (81%)
2.	Model appropriate behavior	104 (53%)
3.	Counsel student	89 (46%)
4.	Proximity praise	81 (42%)
5.	Tokens or points	57 (29%)
6.	Homenote to parents	53 (27%)
7.	Reward replacement behavior	49 (25%)
8.	Verbal reprimand	48 (25%)
9.	Redirection	47 (24%)
10.	Call parent	41 (21%)

Variables Least Problematic in Accepting Interventions for All Teachers

1.	Other staff finds unacceptable	99 (51%)
2.	Expense or cost	59 (30%)
3.	Risky to use (injury, legal problems)	48 (25%)
4.	I lack skill to use the intervention	47 (24%)
5.	Parents find intervention unacceptable	45 (23%)
	Takes too much effort to make material or physically alters class setting	45 (23%)
6.	District or school policy prohibits	44 (23%)
7.	Takes too much time to do	35 (18%)
8.	Does not fit classroom values or philosophy	32 (16%)
9.	Affects other students adversely	28 (14%)

Three Interventions Used Least by All Teachers to Modify Behavior

1.	Corporal punishment	143 (73%)
2.	Physical guidance/restraint	69 (35%)
	Out-of-school suspension	69 (35%)
3.	Send to principal	41 (26%)
4.	Detention	35 (18%)
5.	In-school suspension	28 (14%)
6.	Name on the board	27 (14%)
7.	Public posting	25 (13%)
8.	Ignore	18 (9%)
9.	Contract	16 (8%)
10.	Overcorrection	14 (7%)

Variables Least Problematic in Accepting Interventions for School Psychologists

1.	Lacks the skill to use the intervention	29 (30%)
2.	District or school policy prohibits	25 (26%)
3.	Other staff finds unacceptable	22 (23%)
4.	Does not fit classroom values or philosophy	21 (22%)
5.	Expense or cost	20 (21%)
6.	Affects other students adversely	19 (20%)
7.	Parents find intervention unacceptable	15 (15%)
8.	Risky to use (injury, legal problems)	14 (14%)
9.	Takes too much effort to make material or physically alters class setting	11 (11%)
10.	Takes too much time to do	7 (7%)

Ten Most Selected Interventions by All School Psychologists

1.	Verbal praise	59 (61%)
2.	Call parent	40 (41%)
3.	Model appropriate behavior	38 (39%)
4.	Parent conference	35 (36%)
	Proximity praise	35 (36%)
5.	Privileges	34 (35%)
	Homenote	34 (35%)
6.	Counsel student	30 (31%)
	Redirection	30 (31%)
7.	Reward replacement behavior	28 (29%)
8.	Contract	25 (26%)
9.	Tokens or points	23 (24%)
10.	Cognitive problem solving	21 (22%)
	Privilege withdrawal	21 (22%)

Nicholas, P.M. Teachers' and school psychologists' selection and use of classroom interventions for reducing behavioral exesses. Unpublished Dissertation (1998).

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Three Interventions Used Least by All School Psychologists to Modify Behavior

1.	Corporal punishment	80 (82%)
2.	Physical guidance/restraint	42 (43%)
3.	Out-of-school suspension	24 (25%)
4.	Commercial discipline	20 (21%)
5.	Overcorrection	17 (18%)
6.	Send to the principal	15 (15%)
7.	Name on the board	14 (14%)
8.	Verbal reprimand	10 (10%)
9.	Timeout	9 (9%)
10.	Detention	8 (8%)

Ten Most Reported Interventions Used by Teachers in Salt Lake City During Interview

		Interview	Survey
1.	Call parent	34 (100%)	41 (21%)
	Verbal praise	34 (100%)	157 (81%)
2.	Model appropriate behavior	33 (97%)	104 (53%)
	Privileges	33 (97%)	47 (24%)
	Proximity praise	33 (97%)	81 (42%)
	Verbal reprimand	33 (97%)	48 (25%)
3.	Counsel student	32 (94%)	89 (46%)
	Differential reinforcement	32 (94%)	17 (9%)
	Homenote	32 (94%)	53 (27%)
	Privilege withdrawal	32 (94%)	34 (17%)
	Redirection	32 (94%)	47 (24%)
	Reward replacement behavior	32 (94%)	49 (25%)
4.	Ignore	31 (91%)	17 (9%)
	Tangible rewards	31 (91%)	34 (17%)
5.	Cognitive problem solving	30 (88%)	36 (19%)
6.	Contract	29 (85%)	23 (12%)
	Negotiation	29 (85%)	22 (11%)
	Nonseclusionary timeout	29 (85%)	17 (9%)
	Verbally promise rewards	29 (85%)	25 (13%)
7.	Detention	26 (77%)	10 (5%)
8.	Response cost	25 (74%)	18 (9%)
	Send to the principal	25 (74%)	2 (1%)
9.	In-school suspension	24 (71%)	3 (2%)
10.	Overcorrection	23 (68%)	4 (2%)

Part II, Question 2, Posted Rules: All School Teachers

1.	Respect others	121 (62%)
2.	Talk only with permission	82 (42%)
	Follow directions	82 (42%)
3.	Hands and feet to self	63 (32%)
4.	Complete work	55 (28%)
5.	Stay quiet	46 (24%)
	Be prepared	46 (24%)
6.	Listen	34 (17%)
7.	Respect yourself	32 (16%)
8.	Be on time	30 (15%)
9.	Be kind/courteous	29 (15%)
10.	Respect the school	24 (12%)

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